

# Welcome Home! Saint Paul'sLutheran Church January 2026 Newsletter



## Deco Teardown

Join us Sunday, January 4 immediately after worship, as we take down the Advent & Christmas decorations in the sanctuary & entryway at St. Paul's. The more, the merrier!



## New Member Class



St. Paul's New Member Class is coming up on Sunday, January 25 from 10:30 AM-12 PM in Clare-Wolfe Lounge at St. Paul's. All those who are interested in joining St. Paul's are invited to attend. Please share with family and friends!

## Altar Flower & Bulletin Sponsorships

2026 altar flower & bulletin sponsorships are now available! This is a wonderful way to honor or memorialize loved ones & milestones. Sign up on the bulletin board by Grace Space in St. Paul's entryway. Flowers are \$25 and bulletins are \$20. Checks payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Thanks!

@stpaulserie

## Altar Flower & Bulletin Sponsorships

Sign up on the bulletin board in St. Paul's entryway.

FLOWERS- \$25  
BULLETINS- \$20

Checks payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church.  
3108 Sterrettania Rd  
Erie, PA 16505

Flowers		
January	February	March
1-8-15-22-	1-8-15-22-29-	
April	May	June
3-10-17-24-31-	7-14-21-28-	
July	August	September
2-9-16-23-30-	6-13-20-27-	
October	November	December
1-8-15-22-29-	6-13-20-27-	
Flowers: \$25		

## St. Paul's Lutheran Church

3108 Sterrettania Road

Erie, PA 16506-2658

[www.stpaulserie.org](http://www.stpaulserie.org)

**Saturday Worship Service, 5 PM**

**Sunday Worship Service, 9 AM**

All Sunday worship videos are livestreamed at

[www.facebook.com/stpaulserie](https://www.facebook.com/stpaulserie)

and available at

[www.youtube.com/user/stpaulslutheranerie](https://www.youtube.com/user/stpaulslutheranerie).

**Wednesday Scripture Study, 9 AM**

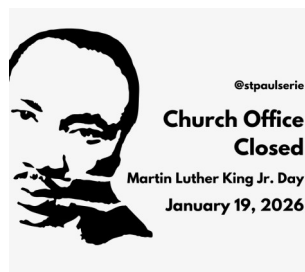


**Office Hours:**

**Mon-Thu 9 AM-3 PM**

814-833-1761

[office@stpaulserie.org](mailto:office@stpaulserie.org)



**Pastor Erik**

**Pastor Erik Young**

814-833-1761

[Pastor@stpaulserie.org](mailto:Pastor@stpaulserie.org)

Pastor's Office Hours: Mon-Wed 9 AM-1 PM

### Focus Word/Phrase for 2026: **SIT DOWN**

Those who know me know that I do not make New Year's Resolutions. Instead, I choose a "focus word or phrase" for the year upcoming; a simple theme used to continue to develop the best version of myself that I can be as a disciple of Christ. Past foci have included GRATEFUL, MINDFULNESS, INTENTIONAL, KIND, FILLED, RELEARN, and 2025's Focus Word, GUAGES.

This year's focus word/theme: **Sit Down**.

I don't sit very well. This probably is not news to any of you. I like to keep moving and I like to stay busy. To quote King Julian from *Madagascar*: "I like to move it move it..." To be blunt: I am a human doing. I always have been. As a child, my Papa called me "Perpetual Motion" and my teachers all described me as having ants in my pants. ADHD would eventually be named in my young adulthood, but by then patterns were set and I was okay with those patterns.

I have never been able to sit still. And if I am honest, I have never really wanted to. Sitting requires patience and focus – things that I don't have time for because there is always something else to be doing. But in constant movement, things are missed... important things. You miss the meaning and depth and feelings behind the words of the story being told. Sometimes you even miss the whole story. You are so busy getting from one place to the other that you miss the beauty of the surroundings you are passing through. You are so fixated on the movement to the destination that you neglect the companions moving with you.

You can see in the previous statements that I realize that, in my rush to get everywhere, I know that I might miss everything that truly matters. I grasp the importance of taking in the surroundings and the value of the people I journey with. Why then is it so difficult – even scary – to slow down and sit down? I think Michele Capots answers this for me in her article, *The Sacred Art of Being Still*: "Truthfully, I avoided stillness because I was afraid to quiet my mind for fear of what I'd find out. What secrets my mind would reveal. I avoided it any way I could, always searching outside myself for the answers to life I was looking for."

She said the quiet part out loud. I am sure this is a big part of why I don't want to slow down and sit down. But I need to and I know it. A favorite confessional liturgy that I discovered decades ago still resonates with me, especially in light of what I have been writing:

*You pursue me, Lord, you besiege me. I seek out the din for fear of hearing you, but in a moment of silence you slip through. I turn from the road, for I have caught sight of you, but at the end of the path you are there awaiting me. Where shall I hide? I meet you everywhere. Is it then impossible to escape you?*

I am afraid to sit down and just be. What might the Holy Spirit say to me in that moment of silence? It is uncomfortable being alone with the thoughts in my head and the emotions in my heart. I like the surface of me – will I like the depth of me? But even more than that: aren't the people around me of value enough to just sit still with and be with? Why do I have to remind myself that they are worth pausing the journey for in order to sit with for a while? They, too, are tired and can use the rest. They, too, are busy and can use the stillness. They are worth a quiet sunset. They are worth a slow cup of coffee. And in getting to know them in that moment, I might just get to know me in this moment.

So yes, my focus phrase for this 2026 will be **Sit Down**. It will take intentionality. It will take effort. It will take discipline. It will take the year to maybe start to get it right. But I will sit down, and, using lyrics from the 1989 song by *James* with this focus phrase as its title, I invite you to join me:

*Those who feel the breath of sadness - sit down next to me.  
Those who find they're touched by madness - sit down next to me.  
Those who find themselves ridiculous - sit down next to me.  
In love, in fear, in hate, in tears - sit down next to me.*

*-Pastor Erik Young*

## Community Care Ministries

### Food Pantry & Reverse Advent Calendar

The Food Pantry continues to help our neighbors because of your generosity! Thank you so much for all your help with the Reverse Advent Calendar. In November, we served 53 individuals; 19 households. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, contact us at [FoodPantry@stpaulserie.org](mailto:FoodPantry@stpaulserie.org). We always need folks to help on the days we pick up food to carry items into the pantry. We could use a few more strong volunteers. Thank you for your support!

### Patchwork of Love Quilting & Knitting Ministry

Join our Patchwork of Love team of quilters & knitters! We meet on Tuesdays from 9-11 AM in Clare-Wolfe Lounge.

### Sock Drive

Another 225 pairs of socks were shared with St. Patrick's Haven in Erie, courtesy of St. Paul's Sock Drive! That means 475 pairs of socks have been donated & shared this season!! Please continue to donate **NEW** pairs of men's socks in the bin located in the entryway of St. Paul's. Thank you!



## Council Highlights

### From the December 2025 meeting:

- Food Pantry will be handing out "Hooked on Books" for kids, as well as quilts for Christmas.
- On Sunday, December 28, Andrew will be leading a "Lessons and Carols" worship, and there will be communion.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 20 at 6:15 PM in Clare-Wolfe Lounge.

## Attendance & Finances

By The Numbers:	November 2025
Avg. Saturday Attendance	25 in-person
Avg. Sunday Attendance	90 in-person 18 online views
November Income	\$33,050
November Expenses	\$30,299
November Difference	\$2,752
November Budget Income	\$28,810
November Budget Expenses	\$30,925
November Budget Difference	-\$2,115
Year-to-Date Income	\$306,628
Year-to-Date Expenses	\$351,590
Year-to-Date Difference	-\$44,962
Year-to-Date Budget Income	\$314,285
Year-to-Date Budget Expenses	\$343,304
Year-to-Date Budget Difference	-\$29,019
2025 Total Budget Income	\$348,607
2025 Total Budget Expenses	\$374,512
2025 Total Budget Difference	-\$25,905

## Worship Ministries

I had an epiphany! We all have heard that expression! So what is the meaning of epiphany?

Epiphany is always on January 6<sup>th</sup> (13 days after Christmas). The season of the church year that follows is about the unwrapping of the Father's gift to the world of his only begotten son. Christmas was about Jesus as fully human - a baby born to Mary and laid in a manger. But Epiphany is about Jesus who is fully divine - the son of God.

Epiphany is the second oldest festival of the Christian church - only Easter is an older observance. Originally, Epiphany celebrated four different events, all on one day; the birth of Jesus, his baptism, his first miracle and the visit of the Magi. Each of these is a revelation of God to humanity.

Epiphania is a Greek word meaning revelation or appearance. It underscores the importance of the day when Jesus was revealed as the savior of the world!



-Submitted by Ruth Mussett.



## Congregational Care Ministries

### Congregational Sympathy

Congregational sympathy is shared with the family & friends of **Denny Hickman**, brother-in-law of Mike Barber, who passed away November 27, 2025.

Sympathy is also shared with the family & friends of **Jim Szymanowicz**, husband of Marsha Szymanowicz, who passed away December 3, 2025.

### Congregational Prayers

Please keep our siblings in Christ in your daily prayers: **Richard Davies, Liz & Ted Davis, Dan DeCoursey, Vicki Fischer, Charlotte Haggerty, Rick Hetrick, Jessica Kidd, Judy Matthews, Becke Moniot, Terry Moyer, Sue Snyder, Cheryl Till, & Gary**. Pray for those who are dealing with cancer, financial hardships, & facing illness or surgery.

Continue to pray for those who are homebound or in nursing homes: **Ann Anderson, Vince Balinski, Debi Firment, Noni Gardner, Dottie Johnson, & Sandy Pamin**. Wrap your hearts around those who are alone, broken-hearted, grieving, or anxious.

Bless our teachers everywhere & pray for St. Paul's **Children's Church, Child Development Center, & Preschool teachers**.

We continue to pray for those who are close to us who serve in the military, including their families: **Dylan Green**, as well as friends of St. Paul's— **Samuel Arthur, Luke Goodwin, Brennan Madara, Natalie Ramish-Long, Benjamin Sperring, Brody Swab, Jordan Swab, Christopher Tinsman, Allison Ward, & Zachary Zehner**.

We keep our college students in prayer as they study and prepare for their future vocations: **Corinne Bechtold, Megan Bechtold, Sophie Beilharz, Stella Beilharz, Andrew Collins, Jacob Gross, Sebastien Jones, Xavier Jones, Drew Kwiatkowski, Ethan Leopold, Ellie Schau, & Hannah Schmidt**.

### Anniversaries

Jan 8— Joe & Sue Lang, Tom & Nancy Madara

Jan 22— Ron & Cheryl Till

Jan 24— Ron & Christa Kaffka

### Birthdays

Jan 1— Abby Laufer

Jan 2— Darryl Schmidt

Jan 6— Elysa Farrell, Joshua Kidd, David McIlvried

Jan 7— Ruth Moyer, Karen Stephens

Jan 10— Jeremy Ditzler

Jan 11— Jake Buzzard

Jan 13— Lynn Jackson

Jan 14— Kasey Perrin

Jan 17— Keri Schmidt

Jan 18— Sabrina Beilharz

Jan 20— Mark Johnson

Jan 22— Mason Reitz, Debby Sullivan, Nikki Zehner

Jan 27— Vicki Fischer

Jan 30— Kallin Perrin

### Baptism

We welcome **Rowan Clay**, son of Lyssa Hiatt & Brian Steward, into the body of Christ on January 18, 2026.



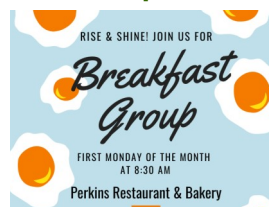
### Directory Update

Bev Loomis, 847 Boyer Rd, Erie, PA, 16511

### Congregational Fellowship

**Breakfast Group** meets on Monday, January 5 at 8:30 AM at Perkins at 4403 Peach St. in

Erie. All are welcome & responsible for their own meals.



### Congregational Thank You Notes

*Thank you for keeping me updated with the Newsletter. I really enjoy it.*

*God bless~*

*Phyllis (Kennedy)*

*Thank you for your generous gift. Your compassion and support allow us to continue offering more than just shelter. We provide nourishment, comfort, friendship, and a safe place where men who are unhoused are treated with dignity and respect.*

*Because of you, we are making a meaningful difference, one life, one night at a time.*

*Blessing at this Season of Thanks!*

*St. Patrick's Haven Board*

*Sisters of St. Joseph of NWPA*

*This year's Christmas Cookie Tray Ministry was a huge success with 70+ cookie trays! The cookie trays went to individuals and families as well as 3 warming shelters (The Upper Room, St. Patrick's Haven, Our Neighbor's Place) and the Millcreek First Responders (police, fire & paramedics) to share in St. Paul's Christmas spirit.*

*Ruth & I would like to thank everyone that donated cookies, helped assemble the cookie trays on Saturday, Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> and those that delivered the cookie trays.*

*We would also like to thank Marsha Szymanowicz for making the beautiful bows for the cookie trays to Barb Davies for the mini candy canes. We would also like to thank Steven Roward for setting up the tables for us.*

*We could not have done all of this without all of you and everyone's kindness proves that St. Paul's is a loving and caring church.*

*Terry & Ruth Moyer, Cookie Tray Ministry*

## January Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> <i>Church Office Closed</i> <b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>2</b> <i>Preschool Closed</i> 7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	<b>3</b> <b>5:00pm Worship</b>
<b>4</b> 8:15am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Church <b>9:00am Worship</b> 10:15am Advent & Christmas Deco Teardown	<b>5</b> 8:30am Breakfast Group 9:45am Children's Chapel 1:45pm Children's Chapel 6:00pm Confirmation Youth Group 6:30pm Property Team Meeting	<b>6</b> <b>Epiphany</b> 9:00am Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 6:15pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting	<b>7</b> 9:00am Scripture Study 10:00am Staff Meeting 8:00pm Basketball	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	<b>10</b> <b>5:00pm Worship</b>
<b>11</b> 8:15am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Church <b>9:00am Worship</b> 10:15am Coffee Hour	<b>12</b> 9:45am Children's Chapel 5:30pm Security Team Meeting 6:00pm Confirmation Youth Group 6:30pm Worship Team Meeting	<b>13</b> 9:00am Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 5:30pm Faith Formation Team Meeting 6:15pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting	<b>14</b> 9:00am Scripture Study 8:00pm Basketball	<b>15</b> <i>Newsletter Articles Due</i> 6:00pm Well-Watered Disciples Men's Fellowship Group	<b>16</b> 7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	<b>17</b> <b>5:00pm Worship</b>
<b>18</b> 8:15am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Church 9:00am Hiatt Baptism <b>9:00am Worship</b>	<b>19</b> <i>Church Office Closed</i> <b>Martin L. King, Jr. Day</b> <i>Preschool Closed</i> 9:45am Children's Chapel 1:45pm Children's Chapel 6:00pm Confirmation Youth Group	<b>20</b> 9:00am Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 6:15pm Church Council Meeting 6:15pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting	<b>21</b> 9:00am Scripture Study 8:00pm Basketball	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	<b>24</b> <b>5:00pm Worship</b>
<b>25</b> 8:15am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Church <b>9:00am Worship</b> 10:30am New Member Class	<b>26</b> 9:45am Children's Chapel 6:00pm Confirmation Youth Group	<b>27</b> 9:00am Patchwork of Love Quilting Ministry 6:00pm ECE Board Meeting 6:15pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting	<b>28</b> 9:00am Scripture Study 8:00pm Basketball	<b>29</b> <b>4:00pm Food Pantry Distribution</b>	<b>30</b> 7:00pm Alcoholics Anonymous Marble Group	<b>31</b> <b>5:00pm Worship</b>

## Worship Assistants

Date	Event	Ushers	Assist Minister/Reader
Jan 4	2 Christmas	Wright Team	Larry Kessler
Jan 11	Baptism of Our Lord	Zech/Chiapa Team	Wayne Gardner
Jan 18	2 Epiphany	Curtis Team	Karen McKenna
Jan 25	3 Epiphany	Gardner/Marzka	Erich Zech